

SUDBURY URBAN DISTRICT

OR

BOROUGH OF SUDBURY,

IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF WEST SUFFOLK.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

FOR 1898.

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board and of the West Suffolk County Council.)

Population 1881, 6,592. Population 1891, 7,059.

Acreage 2,093. Rateable value £19,428.

Geological formation, Chalk, covered with brick earth or drift sands and gravels, superficially alluvium.

I. BIRTHS.

There were 187 births registered during the year, equivalent to a birth-rate of 26.4 per thousand of the population. The births and birth-rates in the borough during the past seven years were

	1892.		1893.		1894.		1895.		1896.		1897.		1898.
Births	159	...	192	...	176	...	180	...	177	...	129	...	187
Birth-rate	22.5	...	27.0	...	24.0	...	25.4	...	25.2	...	18.2	...	26.4

II. DEATHS.

The number of deaths from all causes registered in the district was 141, from which 28 deaths in the Workhouse and St. Leonard's Hospital from the rural parishes have to be subtracted, leaving the actual deaths as 113 equivalent to a death-rate of 16.0 per thousand of the population. The deaths and death-rates during the past seven years were

	1892.		1893.		1894.		1895.		1896.		1897.		1898.
Deaths registered	172	...	142	...	156	...	143	...	150	...	120	...	141
Deaths belonging } to the District }	130	...	122	...	137	...	111	...	125	...	96	...	113
Death-rate	18.4	...	17.2	...	19.3	...	15.7	...	17.7	...	13.5	...	16.0

INFANT MORTALITY.

The deaths among infants under one year of age were 19, this is equivalent to the proportion of 101.6 deaths to a thousand births. Last year it was only 9 or 69.7 per thousand births.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES (including infantile Diarrhœa.)

Caused 7 deaths, equal to a death-rate of 0.9 per thousand of the population. The causes of these deaths were Scarlet Fever 1, Whooping Cough 1, Diarrhœa 2, Measles 3.

DEATHS FROM OTHER CAUSES.

Belonging to the district were 106 : these included the following causes ; Phthisis 10, Bronchitis and Pneumonia 24, Heart Diseases 12, Cancer 8, Injuries 0, Influenza 1.

OBSERVATIONS.

The vital statistics recorded above are close to the average of preceding years. The birth-rate is higher than the previous year, which was unprecedently low. On the other hand the death-rate among infants was greater ; this was mainly due to the prevalence of Diarrhœa during the summer, and of measles during the winter months.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT.

During the year only 9 cases of the notifiable infectious disease occurred, a most unusually small number. These were as follows :—Scarlet Fever 7, Erysipelas 2.

SCARLET FEVER.

Though seven cases of this disease occurred during the year, there was no evidence of any spread of infection from the houses affected, the cases were in different parts of the town and scattered over the year, and all were of a mild type except one; this latter was that of a lad, aged 16, who died after three days' illness of a malignant form. Several other children were in the house, but all escaped.

One case of suspected Scarlet Fever in a servant was moved to the Isolation Hospital, but was afterwards found to be a case of Measles. One case of Scarlet Fever was that of a child in a washerwoman's house; this case was at once taken to the Isolation Hospital, and the house disinfected.

The usual precautionary measures and disinfection were applied in all cases.

MEASLES.

A severe epidemic of this disease took place in November and December; few families escaped and three children died of broncho-pneumonia following. The infant Schools, both in North Street, and the Board School, were obliged to be closed, in consequence of the prevalence of the disease.

CHICKEN POX.

Preceding and contemporary with the Measles, Chicken Pox was very prevalent, in many instances children had both complaints with only a brief interval.

Several cases of Whooping Cough occurred in the Spring with one death, and during the Summer, Diarrhoea was prevalent, specially among children, causing two deaths.

The Isolation Hospital had two patients admitted during the year, one of Measles and one of Scarlet Fever.

WATER SUPPLY.

In my report for the previous year, I mentioned that in order to keep up the supply of town water, it had become necessary to shut off the flow to the main during the night, and that this intermittency of supply was not due to any deficiency in the quantity of water pumped into the reservoir, but was due to the excessive leakage, more water being lost through leakage than was actually used.

Early in the year the Council found it was necessary to deal with this very serious and important matter, and to endeavour to arrest this waste of water. The Town Surveyor (Mr. Hayward) undertook the matter, and after a most elaborate series of tests, was able to locate and arrest all the most important sources of leakage, and to reduce a waste of 108,000 gallons per day to about 18,000. This successful recovery of wasted water was a most important matter for the welfare of the town, and has allowed of a continuous supply being maintained throughout the year, and not only so, but there is now always a three days' supply in hand.

Six analysis of private well water were made during the year. Three of these were found to be impure; the wells in consequence were closed, and the town water laid on.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE.

The necessity and difficulty of dealing with the Melford Road sewer, and the disposal of the sewage from that increasing part of the town, has brought prominently forward the consideration of the whole question of the town sewer and sewage. In September last the Council instructed the town Surveyor, Mr. Hayward, to make a report on the subject.

This he has thoroughly done and revealed many serious defects in the structure and position of the town sewers. These are for the most part old brick culverts of varying shapes and sizes; in some places the gradients were found to be so inaccurate that accumulation of sewage matter collected. The connecting drains are chiefly porous pipes, and the junctions were often most imperfectly made. There is no doubt that the main sewers of the town were originally intended for the carriage of storm water only and that afterwards they were used as sewers.

From these investigations and the hidden dangers revealed, it is evidently necessary in order to maintain the health of the town, that an entire new system of sewers should be laid down, at the same time the old ones might with advantage revert to their primitive design of only conveying storm water.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Until the last few years when the Melford Road difficulty arose, the sewage has been so disposed of as to prevent any injury to the health of the town. One portion enters the river, where it is speedily oxidised by the much greater volume of water, so that a mile and a half from the town analysis fails to detect its presence. Another portion, formerly in privy middens, is collected by 500 pails and conveyed to vacant land on the outskirts of the town, and a smaller portion is still received into privy middens.

None of these methods of getting rid of the town sewage are satisfactory, rather the reverse, but up to the present time no other available method was either possible or practical, though often considered. Now, however, the recent discovery and development of the Bacteriological system of purifying sewage, which has been so successfully applied in other places, brings home a feasible scheme, which with a new system of sewers, could be easily adopted at a reasonable cost. I have examined samples which the Surveyor, Mr. Hayward, personally took from places where the Bacteriological filters are now used, samples of the crude sewage, and then of the effluent after filtration, and I can safely say that if this system is adopted, the whole sewage of the town can be successfully dealt with and purified.

The Surveyor has carefully taken all the necessary levels and prepared a large map to scale, showing the practicability of a sewage scheme to carry out this principle.

During the year the pail system of sewage collection has increased to 498 tubs. If this system is to continue steps will have to be taken to cover in and properly drain the places of deposits, both on the Waldingfield Road and at Ballingdon, as several complaints have been received as to nuisances arising in wet weather.

HOUSES.

There were 15 new houses and a new silk factory erected and inspected during the year. Several old houses have been repaired, others are unoccupied as being unfit for human habitation.

FACTORIES AND TRADES.

The Factories in the district, viz., 5 Silk-weaving, 2 Mat-making, 2 Stay-making, 1 Soap and Candle Works, have been conducted without offence or complaint in their trade processes.

Systematic as well as special inspections have been made during the year, including the Slaughter Houses, Bake Offices, Cowsheds, etc., and any defects observed were remedied. An application for registering a Slaughter House for the killing of pigs was refused, as the position of the premises was unsuitable.

The following is the report of the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. T. W. A. Hayward, C.E., Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

Number of Nuisances removed by written notice	...	...	...	...	51
„ „ „ verbal notice	...	...	...	...	117
„ additional houses provided with water	...	...	...	...	36
„ „ privies, using the tub service	..	...	...	...	32
„ new houses erected and inspected including new silk factory	...	...	...	...	16
„ houses disinfected	...	...	...	...	5
„ notices received from the Inspector of Factories and Workshops.	...	...	...	...	6
„ All of which were remedied	...	...	...	...	6

Several defective sewers were repaired.

Several ditches into which sewage flows, were cleaned.

Numerous nuisances were removed in the form of ashes and refuse heaps.

No legal proceedings were taken during the year.

Tabular statements according to the forms required by the Local Government Board and the West Suffolk County Council are appended to the Official Copies of this report.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.

